

## **Q & A for IST: Instructional Support Team Model**

- **Why was the Instructional Support Team (IST) program initiated?**

In 1998-99, Don Fleming (Virginia DOE) noted the work of professionals like Jim Tucker, Joe Kovalski, Sylvia Rosenfield, and Todd Gravois, and began to introduce a variation of the latter's *Instructional Consultation Teams* into Virginia. 10 pilot sites were phased in over a three to four year period of time. The original intent was to have one pilot site in each region of the Commonwealth so that those interested in IST could have a representative model somewhere close at hand.

The Virginia model most closely resembles the Instructional Consultation Team model of Rosenfield and Gravois. In fact, Virginia receives ongoing technical assistance and professional development from the ICT Lab at the University of Maryland.

Cindy Cave and Wayne Barry currently direct the state's efforts with IST. Virginia TTACs (Training and Technical Assistance Centers) provide all on-site training to IST schools in Virginia.

- **What is the purpose of IST?**

IST is a school improvement tool designed to improve instruction (through increased professional collaboration, problem solving, reflection, and support among school personnel). IST literature notes: "The critical issue is the adaptability of the instruction to the individual learner."

- **What are the goals of IST?**

There are 2 goals:

1-improved instruction

2-professional development toward developing a problem-solving school culture

- **What is the Focus of IST?**

The focus of IST is the instructional match between students and teachers and student and curriculum.

- **What training is provided to schools that participate?**

All IST team members receive a minimum of three days training from TTAC professionals. The IST teacher receives an additional 9 days of training from TTAC that s/he trains the other IST team members on. Other training and professional development is provided as the IST team teacher or team members might need or request.

A school must allocate money for a teacher, with no other school responsibilities, to assist team members in addressing the instructional needs that come before them. IST facilitators provide professional development in math, reading, writing, and student behavior management. They also provide daily consultation to teachers and assist them in charting student baseline behavior and growth. Through the use of instructional-based assessment, IST team teachers and team members lead a data-driven process toward improved instruction and improved learning.

- **What assumptions provide the foundation of the IST model?**

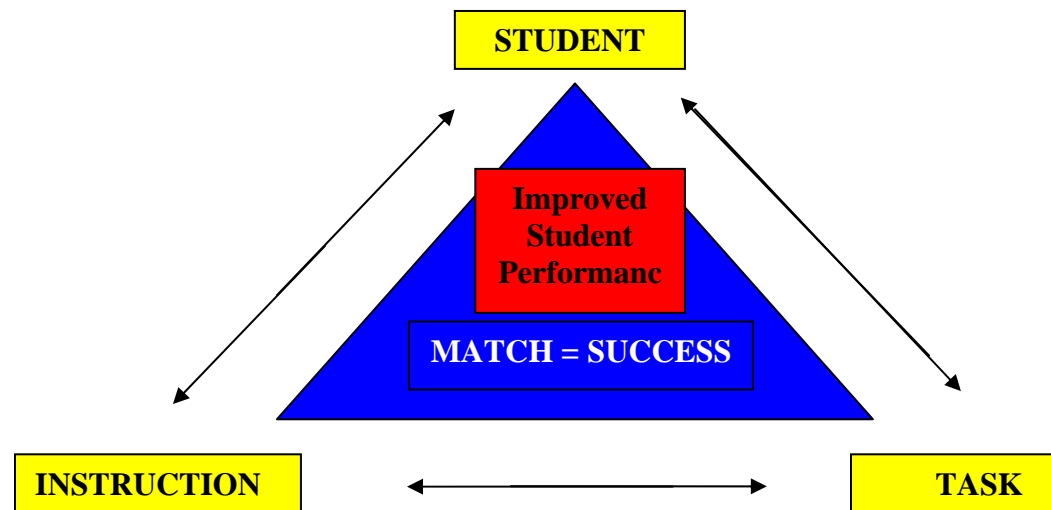
Three assumptions lie at the heart of the IST model:

- (1) all students are learners (when a student is not making acceptable progress the match between student, instructional task, and environment should be examined and improved upon);
- (2) focus on instructional match (interventions are strategies that can be delivered in any setting where the teacher is differentiating instruction);
- (3) build a problem-solving community in the school.

- **How is an IST Model program assessed?**

A methodical set of procedures is used to ensure that IST teams are following procedures as prescribed. Heretofore these have been known as Phase I or Phase II validation, but there are currently efforts underway to adopt the University of Maryland's ITC Lab model of program evaluation.

## **Highly Collegial, Problem Solving Model: IST Influences on Learning**



- **What type of professional development is provided by the IST facilitator?**

*The IST teacher is trained to faithfully follow procedures related to:*

- 1-assessment (instructionally based)
- 2-data collection
- 3-problem analysis
- 4-problem identification
- 5-intervention design
- 6-implementation
- 7-evaluation

*The IST teacher is also provided guidelines for improving teacher performance through:*

- Providing professional development
- Modeling
- Coaching
- Supporting
- On-site assessing

The IST process leads to sharing and collaboration that impacts the school culture & creates system change.

- **What type of documentation do you have to support the IST Model?**

Change might take a year or two to evolve but schools frequently notice a reduction in the number of students referred for special education evaluation, because instructional intervention begins at the time of referral. It is also not unusual for schools to experience a reduction in the number of students exhibiting behavioral problems, and there is frequently a reduction in the number of grade-level retentions experienced.

- **How does a school become an IST School Site?**

Schools who are interested in knowing more about the IST approach are invited to an overview meeting, usually held in January/February, as part of the application process. These schools' representatives are encouraged to take a site visit to the IST school in their region to determine if the process would work for them. Once the application is completed and received, TTACs, with the assistance of Cindy Cave and Wayne Barry, choose the new schools for the approaching school year.

- **1<sup>st</sup> Year in IST**

1-Approximately 18 days of training during the 1<sup>st</sup> year (by TTAC) for the IST Teacher. IST team members receive 3 days of training from TTAC and approximately 15 days of training from the IST teacher.

2-Team development

3-Relevant assessment practices

4-Collaboration

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Year in IST**

On-going professional development is provided for the IST Teacher (facilitator) and IST Team Members.

- **Grants associated with IST**

There is currently no grant money to support schools interested in developing an IST team. The VDOE will, however, pay for all the training and related expenses in developing an IST teacher and team members (mileage, lodging, meals, etc.).

- **Who do I contact to gain information on Virginia Schools that have been involved with the IST model?**

Wayne Barry has a list of schools that currently use the IST model. There are plans to add and train as many as 8 teams during the 2006-'07 school year. Contact Wayne in the following ways:



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